

Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law

-fby Michael T. Lifrak -

ONLY EIGHT SUBWAY STOPS away, in the heart of Greenwich Village, lies the young and energetic Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law. Part of Yeshiva University, Cardozo occupies ten floors of a seventeen story building on 12th Street and Fifth Avenue. The school admitted its first class in 1976 and has grown immensely in size and acclaim since. According to an admissions brochure, U.S. News and World Report recently named Cardozo as one of the top five "up and coming" law schools in the country.

When I made the short trip to Cardozo on a rainy Monday morning, I expected to wait a long time in order to speak to an individual in the Admissions Office. However, when I arrived, I was ushered in extremely promptly and treated kindly. As one walks through the halls of the School, a definite sense of community and good-will seem to exist.

The diverse and flexible Cardozo curriculum is, as the School's bulletin states, "designed to provide students with a broad, traditional legal education as well as with a variety of innovative courses in specialized areas. All first-year students may only take required courses. The purpose of this rule is to provide each student with the basic principles of Common Law and to help the student develop opinions on what roles they want to play in the profession. Courses in the first-year curriculum include Contracts, Torts, Property and Civil Procedure. All are full-year classes. Also required are Moot Court and the Legal Writing Program, which are designed to sharpen the writing and speaking skills of students. Each first-year student is placed into two sections of 45 students each. The bulletin states that these sections create an atmosphere "that serves to reduce some of the strain of the first year, while enhancing the quality of the educational program."

Second and third year courses are mostly elective. Students can choose a traditional legal education and choose from any number of areas such as corporate law, commercial law, or taxation; or they may select courses in developing areas including Bioethics and the Law,

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Courtesy of Yeshiva University

Censorship of Artwork and Movies, and Freedom and the Constitution. Students must take 84 credits in six full-time semesters in order to receive a degree of Juris Doctor (J.D.).

According to Admissions Counselor Amy Gewirtz, a 1978 Barnard College and 1982 Cardozo graduate, two of Cardozo's main attractions are its excellent clinical programs and four journals. Some of the externships include the

Corporation Counsel's Appellate Externship, the Criminal Appeals Clinic, the Criminal Law Clinic, the Immigration Law Clinic, the Intensive Trial Advocacy Program, the Mediation Clinic, the Program in International Law and Human Rights, the Prosecutor Practicum, and the Tax Clinic.

One of the key departments of the college is the Center for Professional Development. It oversees the clinical

programs, internship programs, public interest funding, and placement services. The Center reports that 54 percent of graduates work in private practice, 14 percent work in the government, 11 percent work in corporations, 7 percent work in judicial clerkships, 5 percent work in public interest, and 2 percent teach.

One aspect of the Law School that the Admissions Office and the bulletin both stress is the school's renowned faculty. The school has nearly fifty assistant and full-time professors from varying backgrounds. A brochure states that the School was recently included among the top twenty law schools for faculty scholarship in a survey by IIT-Chicago Kent.

A modern, clean, and spacious library, the Dr. Rebecca Chutick Law Library occupies three floors of the School's building. It contains more than 350,000 volumes and is open until midnight on most days.

Housing is not provided by Cardozo, but there are extensive programs to help students find affordable housing. Limited space is available for first year students at New York University's Law School dormitories. Also, several spaces are available at one of Fordham Law School's dormitories in Manhattan. "Overall, [Cardozo] is a commuter school," stated Ms. Gewirtz.

Admissions to Cardozo is based on the applicant's personal statement and recommendations, but the most important factors are LSAT scores and

G.P.A. The average LSAT score is 160, while the average G.P.A. is 3.28. The September 1993 class consists of 250 individuals out of an application pool of approximately 2,200. 52 percent of the students are male, 48 percent are female. The students range from the age of 20-57. Applicants must hold a baccalaureate degree, and must have taken the LSAT.

A special admissions program which Cardozo has is the Accelerated Entry Plan (A.E.P.). Students in this program begin studies in January or May, and their class size is smaller (45 students) than September's class. This plan allows flexibility for "non-traditional" students such as those who are working on other post-graduate degrees. A Columbia undergraduate education "certainly has value" according to Anita T. Walton, the Director of Admissions, and several Columbia graduates currently attend Cardozo. Various need and merit based scholarships, as well as many loans, are available for students who need financial aid to help pay for the tuition of \$16,375 per year.

Students have a generally positive view of Cardozo. The majority of the students with whom I spoke said that the school is extremely competitive. Jay Bohenski, a graduate of Touro University, stated, "I've never experienced a more competitive environment than the first year here." Bohenski said that the environment becomes more friendly after the first year. Jeff Bloom, a Northwestern graduate, said that, overall, he enjoys attending Cardozo, but he

said that one area in which the college seems to be lacking is the Placement Department. He said, "Nevertheless, academically [Cardozo] is excellent. It is well worth the investment."

One facet of the School which is readily apparent to any visitor is the obvious lack of minority students. Yeshiva University is a Jewish-affiliated school, and according to Ms. Walton, this is a problem in recruiting minorities. Only 10 percent of the current students are minorities, but that is an increase from recent years. The School has a Black, Latino, and Asian Law Students Association which recruit minority students, and the Admissions Department conducts targeted mailings, attempting to increase the minority population.

Along with the obvious advantage of its location in New York City, Cardozo offers a wide range of options for its students. Cardozo is quickly gaining international respect as quality law school. Ms. Walton summed up most of the feelings of the students by stating, "New York and Cardozo are simply great places to go to school." Jeremiah Manning, a Columbia College graduate of 1990, expressed the same sentiments, saying that the other law schools close to Cardozo help in research. He said that the School's location in New York City was a very important factor in his decision to attend Cardozo, basing this on his experience at Columbia. "I think the reason I chose Cardozo was my four years at Columbia," he said. •

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